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Abstract.

Little has hitherto been known of the Nhambiquára who inhabit the valley of the Juruena and are spread thence to the rivers Sarauá and Galera, affluents of the Guaporé. In 1908, an official Brazilian explorer, Colonel Rondon, during his journey in the interior of Matto Grosso, was able to enter into friendly relations with them, collecting ethnological objects, and gathering information of their life, geographical distribution and customs, with those also of the Parecí.

The Parecí give the names Uáikoikuré and Quihaxiaré to the Nhambiquára, thus dividing them into two groups. Individuals of the latter group have darker skins and are more warlike. Colonel Rondon appears to have cleared up the meaning of the name Kabixí, which has been a cause of confusion, as often happens with collective names like Bugre, Tapuya, Guayanaz and others. The dwellers in Villa Bella (Matto Grosso) were accustomed to call Kabixí those Indians whom the Parecí called Uáikoikuré, and who, as now stated, are Nhambiquára. This name of Uáikoikuré is given by the Parecí of the sub-tribes Kazinití and Uainaré of the rivers Arinos, Sacuriú-iná, Tabóra-iná and Timalatiá to their kindred of the Kozárini group who inhabit the upper parts of the Rio Verde, the Juba, Cabaçal and Jauru. The term Kabixí is derogatory, implying an inferior condition.

The Nhambiquára are usually of medium height; they have large teeth, the abdomen rather prominent, muscular thighs, slender legs and well made feet. They perforate the nostrils, the nasal septum and the ear-lobes. Through the holes made in the nose they pass small pieces of wood, and from the ear lobes they hang ornaments made of small beads of ceament. They wear armlets, bracelets, leg ornaments and head collars made from the fruit of the mbambiba. They live by the chase, but also plant maize, yams, potatoes, mandioc, and beans. They smoke leaves similar to Brazilian tobacco and do not use hammocks but sleep on the ground, like the Campa-otaíri and the Amuéas of the Gran Pajonal.

In the collection made by Colonel Rondon for the National Museum at Rio de Janeiro there is an alimentary paste similar to the Kásábé of the Parecí, made from pounded mandioc. The native lyeu or bitumen is used with string to fasten arrow points to their shafts. It appears to be a mixture of Ouaini and wax, and is preserved in leaves of the Malí-malí palm. It melts at a very low temperature.

To fell trees a stone axe, fixed in a wooden handle by means of cord and bitumen, is used. The Indian who succeeds in felling certain trees with this primitive instrument receives as reward an arara or mutúm feather for a nose-ornament. Such a decoration is usually reserved for warlike prowess among the natives of Brazil. The bows are large, strong, of red wood and well-polished, with semi-cylindrical transversal section. Those in the Rondon collection vary from 1m. 80 to 2m. 35 in length. To draw an arrow of 50cm. between the larger bow and its string of tucum a traction force of 60 kilos. is necessary, as verified by the dynamometer. There are five types of arrows. They have two musical instruments, one, a double flute made of two pieces of bamboo tied together, the other, two concave disks of calabash, about 8 cm. in diameter, united at the edges by a strip of Malí-malí and bren. The upper disk has three orifices.

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(ca. 1912)

304 Only the men have pierced upper lips and nasal septa; the women, never.

Children still at the breast did not have their lip or septum perforated; but those whose first milk molars had appeared already had both areas pierced. Hence I believe that this operation is not performed until boys have reached the age of two.

301 Not until they are five or seven do they begin to insert through the lip and nose perforations some thin and distinctive plugs nearly always made of reed stems.

Their use is widespread in the Serra do Norte; I have seldom seen Indian men without those plugs.

[Fig. 35]

The lip plug rests between the median upper incisors and protrudes aggressively upward; the septum plug is thicker and shorter. Both are cut to the appropriate size by means of fire.

[241] If the plugs fall out, the wearer immediately retrieves them and sets them back in the perforations; on those few occasions when [the Indians] removed them to show us how they were fastened, they promptly replaced them as if ashamed to be deprived of their ornaments.

As a rule they wear both simultaneously. Some Indians prefer to the modest nose plug another adorned with a macaw or curassow feather.

[304] Contrary to what used to be thought, these ornaments do not seem to constitute marks of distinction or signs of hierarchy.

We saw youths of eighteen adorned with such plumes; none of the Indians accorded them the least importance.

When they wear these feathers, they forego the lip plug.

Their predilection for black beads is remarkable; they make them from the shells of small palm nuts to form multi-looped necklaces, and when we offered them an assortment of glass beads they chose the black ones at first. Yet they ended up choosing all of them... They are insatiable.

Nevertheless, their ornaments are predominantly black in color. Black bracelets; rings made with black palm nuts which they used to wear as ear pendants and which they carry now on their fingers to